The next issue of CHALLENGE will appear in three weeks, after which we will resume our regular biweekly schedule.

PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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FREE MOHAWK

RACIST STATE TERROR MEANS FIGHT BACK!

CHICAGO, July 21—Today, communists from Progressive Labor Party (PLP) joined organizations #FreedomForMohawk, #NoMore Foundation, and #DefundCPD for the spirited "From Mohawk, With Love" Anniversary Rally (see CHALLENGEs from 12/3/20). The event, which brought almost 40 people out, was created to highlight the struggles and triumphs of Jeremey "Mohawk" Johnson in the first year since his arrest in August of 2020.

Workers, students, and community organizations banded together in a show of support and solidarity for Mohawk's case, while sharing donated food, clothing, household items, and literature. Those of us in PLP helped set up tables and supplies, lead chants, give speeches and distribute over 200 copies of CHALLENGE newspaper.

Throughout the last year, we have helped organize within a citywide defense committee to maintain a militant presence in front of the Cook County jail and courthouse, a bedrock of the capitalist bosses' racist and sexist legal system. But this time we opted for a change in tactics, taking the fight right to the office of Scott Waguespack, the alderman (city councilman) who represents the city ward where Mohawk currently lives.

Predictably, Waguespack has done nothing to assist in getting the charges against Mohawk dropped, despite our appeals. But given politicians' role in maintaining this racist profit system that thrives off state terror and incarceration, this should come as no surprise.

The abolition of oppressive class structures and the liberation of the international working class necessitates mass revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the communist PLP. The fight to free Mohawk is intertwined with the broader fight to smash deportations and imperialism, in order to establish an egalitarian communist world.

Put capitalism in its grave, join PLP

During one of her many speeches given while leading the rally, Mohawk's close friend and former roommate spelled the situation out clearly: "They (the bosses) are never gonna stop." It's true that we cannot have any illusions that we can appeal to the bosses' "moral sensibilities;" their use of state terror against our class will only sharpen as capitalism spirals deeper into crisis.

That is why we must continue to stand with, not only Mohawk, but all of our fellow workers within the prison and court systems that continue to be tortured, abused, and murdered by the capitalist state. Mohawk has been on EHM this long because the courts want us to forget about him so they can just throw him in prison, but we will not let that happen.

Racist harassment all a part of the bosses' plan

As of July 21, Mohawk has been on electronic home monitoring (EHM) for 335 days. During an antiracist protest in downtown Chicago last August he was arrested, beaten, doxxed (having his personal information leaked), and then the kkkops denied him any contact with his loved ones or legal counsel. Coming before a judge yet again before today's rally, our collective hope was that with his new job, clean record, "good behavior," and over 200 character letters detailing how great of a human he is would at least have his EHM monitor removed on this day.

However, the kkkops and courts have made it their personal mission to keep their chains on him for as long as they possibly can. Instead of being removed from EHM, Mohawk was accused of disobeying court orders by leaving his home unwarranted while under house arrest, even though Mohawk has documented his EHM monitor going off while he was at home over 40 times.

It is obvious what the bosses are doing: they're torturing Mohawk from his own home with a broken monitor and the underlying threat that they can always send the kkkops to his house regardless of whether he's done anything wrong. They have painted this antiracist fighter as a monster when it is clear who the real monsters are.

In a letter that Mohawk wrote shortly after his arrest, he called out the system's hypocrisy:

"The same institution that has placed me under house arrest for allegedly attacking a police officer in an event where a multitude of officers, many of whom have a myriad of allegations levied against them for use of excessive force, attacked women and students, tear gassed medic tents, and kettled unarmed protesters who were speaking out against the very same brutality they faced."

We will rally in front of every alderman's office, court house, and street corner until Mohawk's charges are dropped. We are committed to fighting with our entire class against a racist capitalist system that can never serve our needs, and building the international Party that will one day put that system finally in its grave!

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

★**EDITORIAL** *Olympics: spectacle for a dying system..p2*

★**NEW YORK CITY** *Workers have no borders–fight for a communist world..p3*

★ **BALTIMORE** *To smash racism, abolish capitalism..p5*

★**LOS ANGELES** *Justice means fighting for communism ..p8*

SCAN ME

OUR FIGHT

☆Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

☆The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

☆Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

☆While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

☆Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

☆Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

☆Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

☆Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

☆Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

☆Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

The Olympics: spectacle for a dying system

As Japan sets daily records for Covid-19 cases, the Tokyo Olympics is exposing an anti-worker system in crisis. The International Olympic Committee's cynical new motto—"Faster, Higher, Stronger—Together"—can't hide the vicious lies the capitalists use to keep workers loyal to "their" nation and "their" bosses. "National pride" is built to suppress class consciousness. In a period marked by a declining U.S.-led order and a rising China, imperialists need intensified nationalism to prepare the working class for world war.

Workers in Japan and everywhere need a society organized around the needs of the working class, not the exploitation of the many by the few. Join Progressive Labor Party to build one communist world!

Japan's profit over workers' needs

Once a poster child for an efficient capitalist democracy, Japan now reflects the decay of the U.S.-led liberal international order. In the wake of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown, a trio of disasters all caused or made far worse by capitalism, the Tokyo Olympics were sold first as "The Recovery and Reconstruction Games" and then as a symbol of "peace." The reality was something else: the eviction and displacement of 300 families (Washington Post, 7/29), a spike in Covid-19 cases, and steadily worsening conditions for local workers. Since 2013, when Japan was named the Olympic host, the city's bosses have attacked homeless workers by locking and lighting up public spaces.

Tokyo is currently in its fourth state of emergency of the pandemic. While Japan boasts about its universal free healthcare, less than 13 percent of the country is fully vaccinated (CNBC News, 7/5). The unvaccinated include thousands of workers at an Olympics that cost $25 billion (AP News, 12/22/2020). A ruling class that spends billions on games and robs workers of their health does not deserve to exist.

The working class in Japan is not having it, with 83 percent against the Games (New York Times, 7/23). In fact, six of ten workers in the country rate the Japanese rulers' response to the pandemic as poor, the most negative assessment of any nation (Pew Research Survey, 7/20).

Working-class rage is clear in Tokyo. Chants of "Go to Hell, Olympics!" could be heard from inside the nearly empty opening ceremony (NY Post, 7/23). The week before, hundreds marched by the Olympics Village Plaza to the headquarters of the Tokyo Olympics Committee to denounce Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for gutting social services. A banner read, "Olympics Kill the Poor." These protests contain the seeds of communist ideas to organize society around working-class health and needs. To make these ideas a reality, our class needs an international communist revolution.

Rich people's games exploit workers

Capitalism has perverted the positive striving for physical health and fitness into a two-tiered system of winners and losers. It's no coincidence that the top five winners of gold medals are among the wealthiest nations: China, the U.S., Japan, Australia, and Russia.

Before every imperialist world war, the capitalists set the course by revving up nationalism, racism, and sexism—all anti-worker ideologies promoted by the Olympic Games. Japan's entrenched racism, from school policies to public harassment, cannot be hidden by their few Black Olympians (Washington Post, 7/31). China's a win-at-all-costs policy takes thousands of children away from their families for gruelling training in government-run "sports schools" (Daily Mail, 5/19/16). The Chinese bosses' world-leading pile of gold medals reflects their rise as an imperialist power now challenging the U.S.

Conditions for U.S. Olympians are no better. Children are funneled into intensive, specialized programs at a young age, leading to social isolation and psychological damage. Sexism is rampant, with women gymnasts starved into eating disorders and serial rapists enabled as coaches and—in at least one case—the team doctor.

The remarkable athletes on screen—pushed to perform amid a pandemic that has killed more than 4 million people worldwide and the surging Delta variant—are a sad reflection of the hollow promises of a capitalist system in crisis. Under the profit system, superstars are chewed up and spit out once they can no longer build TV ratings. Even the winners are losers.

As inter-imperialist competition intensifies, these Games are a prelude to a more lethal rivalry: the next global war. A U.S. Senate committee just approved a bill to require women to sign up for a draft (Military.com, 7/22).

Capitalist disregard for workers' health

The capitalists' dictatorship funds sports for a handful of athletes while ignoring the basic needs of billions of workers. For every Simone Biles, the U.S. superstar gymnast forced to choose between her own mental health and the pressure and rich rewards of winning gold, countless children are deprived of nutrition, physical activity, and basic healthcare.

Even before the pandemic, the bosses' system denied access to essential health services to half the world's population (World Health Organization, 2017). The stark inequalities in health and fitness have nothing to do with individual failures. They're caused by an abysmal healthcare system; a lack of facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and childcare; low wages, superexploitation, pathetic union benefits, budget cuts, and more. In a word, they're caused by capitalism.

Athletics for all

Instead of competitive sports for a few, the dictatorship of the working class will have athletics for all. Progressive Labor Party organizes across five continents for communism, drawing inspiration from the first communist revolutions. In the Soviet Union, workers fought the "win at all costs" mentality by building fizkultura (physical culture). Every factory in every industry gave its workers access to physical education and activity. This was an integral part of Soviet life, an intentional way of rallying masses of workers to engage in social and political activity.

In the 1960s, during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, leftist workers and students fought for mass participation in sports under the slogan, "Friendship first, competition second." They emphasized the fundamental unity of our class over the temporary rivalry of competition.

But because these workers' states failed to abolish all capitalist relations, anti-worker ideas crept back into every aspect of society, including sports. When the Soviet Union and China began making international competitions primary over mass athletic participation, their standards of health began to decline. The reversal of the old movement is illustrated by China's and Russia's emphasis on Olympic medals and rivalries over workers' wellbeing. When the working class settled for less, we lost in every way.

Physical culture for communism

Communists fight for a world where all workers can reach their full potential in body and mind. Where the capitalists hope that every worker waving a national flag is a potential soldier for imperialism, we have one world and one class: the international working class.

While the road to communism is a marathon, PL'ers and friends must respond with urgency by organizing for multiracial unity and internationalism. That's the spirit of communism, where "winning" for the working class means seizing state power and building a communist world. Fight for communism! Join PLP!✪

Fight evictions, expose racist profit motive

Washington, DC, August 4—As the moratorium on evictions in the U.S. was drawing to a close, tenants and organizers including members and friends of the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) rallied with the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA)-affiliated Stomp Out Slumlords (SOS) to protest the evictions of our brothers and sisters that landlords and their political flunkeys are eagerly seeking. Hundreds marched to the White House demanding a halt to evictions. Some camped out overnight in a vigil to protest this attack on the working class.

Stomp out bosses, build red leadership

Class struggle against the bloodsucking landlords—including blocking evictions directly and turning to militant action and support from the rest of the working class—is the way forward. A PLP member also attended the feebly symbolic anti-eviction protest by Cori Bush and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) at the Capitol, but as expected heard nothing about how capitalism plus a pandemic means disaster for workers trying to stay in their homes. These liberal politicians are the main danger for our class because they serve to pacify us, blunt the class struggle, and put our trust into this system.

Class struggle and direct action must stomp out slumlords along with their capitalist brethren through communist revolution. Many participants in this protest, march, and vigil happily received copies of CHALLENGE and pledged to look into the need for a long-term struggle for communism to defeat the racist anti-worker attacks of the bosses.

Protests help organizers and tenants practice their organizing and leadership abilities. Organizers put together graphics, secured food and resources, and spread the word to other organizers and the media. Tenant committees tapped their social networks to activate their neighbors for political actions. For some tenants, these are their first ever political actions. These political actions energized everyone. The main question is under whose leadership is the working class being energized under? PLP affirms the need for communist leadership against evictions, racist housing policies, and this entire profit-system.

Racist eviction crisis

For organizers, tenants, and onlookers, being surrounded by neighbors with a shared purpose can be radicalizing—people begin to imagine the immense power they could have if they continue to organize and fight. We know the eviction crisis is hitting hard, and we cannot sit idly by while our neighbors are at risk of joining the homeless.

According to a 2020 report by the Aspen Institute, an estimated 30 to 40 million people in the U.S. are at risk of eviction due to the Covid-19 housing crisis. If past trends hold, the upcoming eviction crisis will lead to higher rates of Covid-19 infection, especially as new variants emerge, and the impact will be felt most strongly in communities of Black workers (Brookings, 8/2). The scale of this problem exposes fundamental problems of racist capitalism's "profit first, people last" character.

Capitalism endlessly erodes communities and will continue to do so until it is gone and replaced by communist revolution, where we workers run society for ourselves.

Community potlucks, BBQs, and parties along with political protests can bolster revolutionary potential by building a sense of community and solidarity. Joining and building a revolutionary organization, the PLP, will ensure a future for the growth of such working class solidarity as we proceed together on the road to communist revolution.✪

Colombian Independence Day

Workers have no borders—fight for a communist world

New York City, July 20—While the Colombian government promotes speeches to celebrate the country's presumed independence today, young workers living in New York City, including a Progressive Labor Party (PLP) member, PLP supporters and other organizers, denounced the oppression and subjugation of the working class in Colombia by multinationals, corporations and the rulers of imperialist countries like the United States. We marched from Times Square to the consulate of Colombia to Bryant Park and finally to Flushing Meadows. Two months ago the organizing of these young people began, as they met protesting in the streets. The process of organizing has cost them time, debate, discussions and tears. PLP members are struggling to strengthen this international working class solidarity while building a movement for communist revolution where the working class runs the world.

Devastating capitalism

These workers, ranging from 19 to 50 years old, have recognized that the reason they are moved to protest is the sad and cruel suffering caused by devastating capitalism. However, this collective suffering has called for the creation of a community. It has promoted solidarity among workers from different regions of Colombia and even with the struggle of other workers in Palestine, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, South Africa, Cuba, Peru, Mexico and Puerto Rico.

The march began with a speech in English and Spanish written by two communists, one of them a member of the PLP. In this speech, 10 reasons why Colombia is not independent were listed, among them: capitalism and the accumulation of wealth that prevails over life; the colonialism that still displaces thousands of indigenous and Black workers, destroying their communities and culture; the decisions about the so-called Colombian territory that are made from the economic interests of Washington, Ottawa and other international powers. The official numbers of victims of police terror in all its forms during the last two and a half months were also listed, highlighting the violation of the right to protest.

No independence for workers under capitalism

The speech continues saying that we will only celebrate independence when there are no more people starving, there is no more unemployment, lack of opportunities and sexual assaults; no more displacement, environmental destruction and an inefficient health system.

The visual and performative structure of the march included five people with shields and helmets representing the front-line who, almost three months after the social outbreak, still continue to daily confront the oppressive and rapist Mobile Anti-Disturbance Squadron (ESMAD).

There was a second line composed of five weeping women, dressed in black and veiled, carrying signs and mutilated and bleeding body parts. They intervened throughout the march with cries and voices of lament, which were interwoven with the voices that led the march to tell the story of their children and neighbors mutilated and found in the river, at the doors of their homes or still missing. The open fascism that has existed in Colombia throughout its history is reflected in these devious practices to silence denouncing voices, making this territory the number one country in assassinations of social leaders in the world.

Subsequently, came the tombstones with the names of the recent 73 police homicide victims, two large coffins and behind these, other signs and a distorted Colombian flag stained with red ink representing the blood of the victims.

During the march, a stanza from the Milonga del Fusilado composed by the Uruguayan writer Carlos María Gutiérrez was shouted to denounce the violent repression of the Tupamaros in his country, (national liberation movement) in 1973.

"My voice, the one that is screaming / My dream, the one that is still whole / And you know that I only die / If you are listening / Because the one who died fighting / Lives in each partner." The slogan says: For our dead: Not a minute of silence! Not a minute of silence for the disappeared, raped women, starving children, massacres, displaced Afro and indigenous communities.

The march continued on the train to Queens where artistic performances were displayed and people from other countries interacted, explaining the situation in Colombia and establishing similarities with their governments. Mexican, Ecuadorian and Cuban workers joined the chants. In Flushing Park, the anti-imperialist speech and the denunciations of the oppression of the working class in South America continued as people clapped, raised their fists and shouted along with the march.

The march ended in a sit-in by joining an abolitionist group that was waiting for the protesters to share food, dance, and speeches.

The speech that opened the march and accompanied the denunciations in the streets, concluded that we need to get rid of the capitalist system, end imperialism and get rid of all the rulers, multinationals and corporations that oppress us to organize, join forces and fight back.

Workers will only be independent when everyone in this world, including Mexico, Congo, Haiti, Palestine… Everyone is independent! That means workers all around the world run all aspects of society not for profit, but to meet all our needs. That's communism. Power to the working class!✪

PLP Speech at the 416 West Wednesday

To smash racism, abolish capitalism

Baltimore, MD, July 14—Communists have a responsibility—in the fight against police terror, and in all struggles against racism—to go beyond reformism. Think for a moment about the fight against slavery. Looking back, the people we most respect are those who were dedicated to fully abolishing that institution: the hundreds of thousands of folks like Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, and John Brown. We don't look back, with heartfelt admiration, at people who thought slavery couldn't be defeated, and therefore devoted themselves to the lesser goal of trying to make it slightly less horrific.

Similarly, today, we must work hard to share a very important understanding: capitalism—which is the root of racism and police terror—can and must be abolished. Progressive Labor Party (PLP) in Baltimore strives to make that contribution, as part of our vigorous activities supporting the weekly West Wednesday rallies, streaming events, and other parts of the struggle—demanding accountability for the vicious police murder of Tyrone West on June 18, 2013 and for all victims of police terror. In fact, several freedom fighters involved in this work have recently made the decision to join Progressive Labor Party.

As an example of striving to fulfill our responsibility—bringing a revolutionary perspective into the reform struggle—here is an excerpt of a speech given by a member of Progressive Labor Party at a recent West Wednesday streaming event.

Not long ago, in May, President Joe Biden met with the family of George Floyd. After the meeting, Biden said, "…we need to build lasting trust between the vast majority of the men and women who wear the badge honorably and the communities they are sworn to serve and protect.

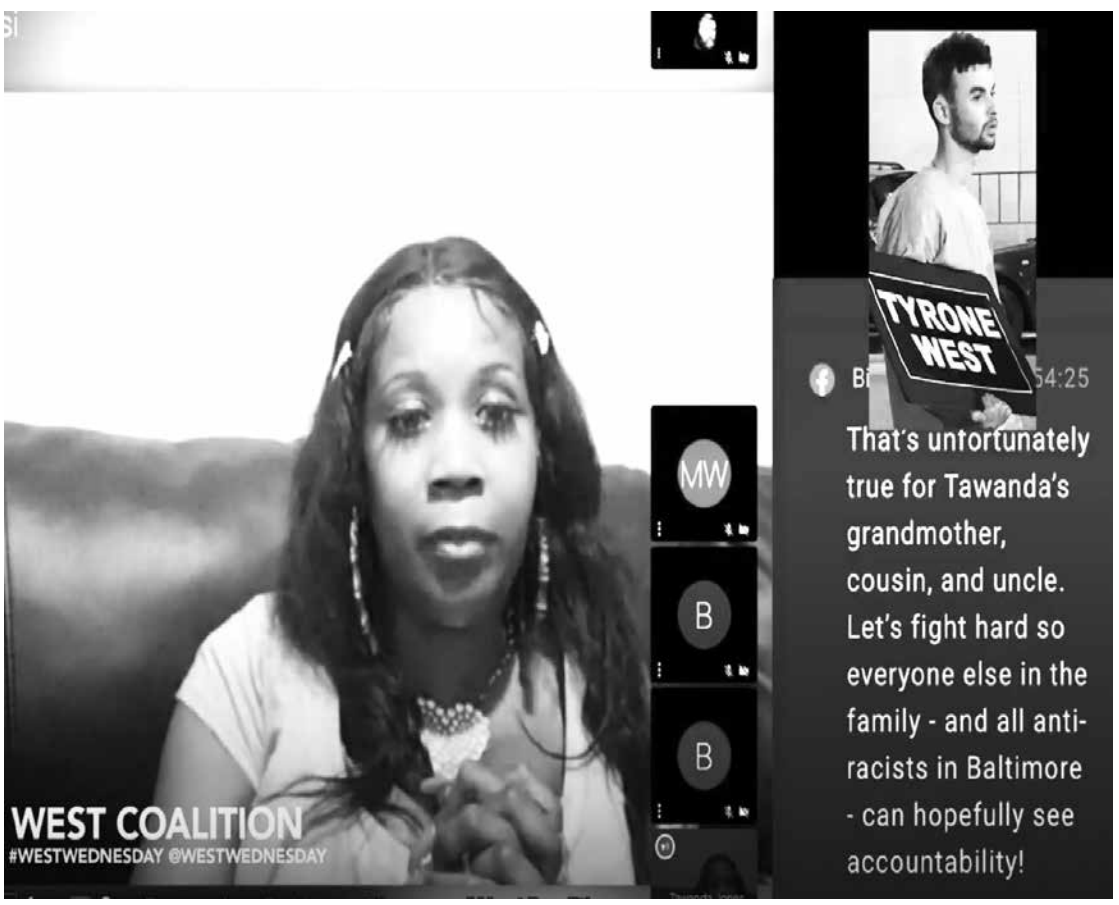
In other words, he says the vast majority of cops are honorable, and we need to trust them. But we know that racism is systemic. What does that actually mean? Think about it. If police were really here to serve and protect, the police cars and helicopters would be everywhere equally. Why are they concentrated in working-class neighborhoods, especially neighborhoods in which the residents are predominately Black & Latin? It has to do with power and control.

High up on the scale of power are the owners of factories and businesses. Above them are the large banks. For example, when Intel wants to build a new factory to make computer chips, the cost is about $10 billion. Businesses like Intel usually don't have $10 billion. They have to borrow it from the biggest banks.

The owners and directors of the biggest banks really run things. Systemic racism allows business owners to pay Black and Latin workers less than white workers. That's how businesses make about a third of their profits. All workers are exploited, but paying lower wages to [non-white] workers is super-exploitation. On top of that, capitalists use systemic racism to divide the working class, weakening our unity. The billionaires want white workers to refuse to unite with Black workers. This disunity keeps us from fighting successfully against our common enemy, the capitalists.

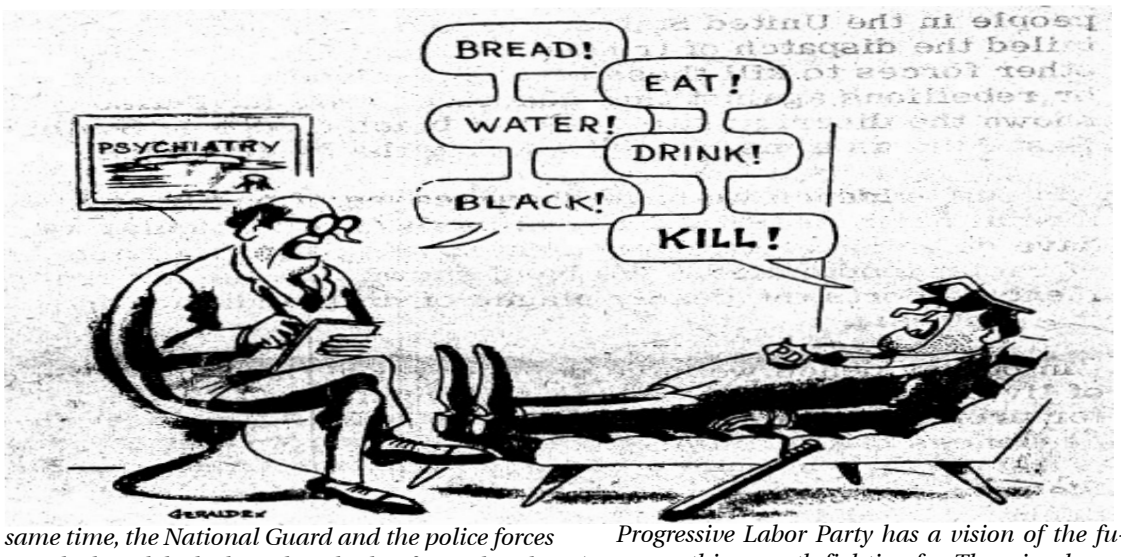
The combination of super-exploitation, together with divide-and-conquer, probably accounts for a huge chunk of their profits—from racism! The big banks know this. They have think-tanks that make policy. No matter who is the mayor or governor or president, the big bankers control the economy and the government. That means they have ultimate control over the role of the cops, the courts, the state's attorneys, and the attorney general.

Remember, after Freddie Gray [in Baltimore, 2015] was killed, and people fought back, the rulers brought in every local police force—plus the National Guard—and concentrated those forces to protect what's important to them: major businesses, Hopkins, the Central Police station, and City Hall. At the same time, the National Guard and the police forces attacked and locked up hundreds of people who didn't hurt anyone, but who DID challenge this system. When you get to the heart of the matter, we live under a dictatorship of the capitalist class. No matter who gets elected, the capitalists call the shots.


TYRONE WEST
54:25
That's unfortunately true for Tawanda's grandmother, cousin, and uncle. Let's fight hard so everyone else in the family - and all anti-racists in Baltimore - can hopefully see accountability!
MW
B
B
WEST COALITION
#WESTWEDNESDAY @WESTWEDNESDAY

Pictured here is Tyrone West's sister, Tawanda Jones, leading the livestream program, not the PL speaker.

Black women are key to building the communist revolution.



Yes, [Derek] Chauvin may spend years in jail, where he belongs, for killing George Floyd. But only seven cops in the whole United States have been convicted for murder since 2005. The cops kill about 1,100 people a year. If you do the math, that means just one single cop will get convicted of murder for every 2,500 people they kill. This is systemic racism. It serves the capitalist class. They want to make us fearful, so they can control us, make us passive, and continue to make their profits off our backs.

Think about the onlookers who felt horrible while watching Chauvin steal the life of George Floyd. Why didn't they rush in and pull Chauvin off the neck of George Floyd? The young woman, Darnella Frazier, who videotaped the horrific murder, wakes up at night thinking about this, and feels awful that she couldn't do more. In the middle of the night, all by herself, she apologizes to George Floyd.

The onlookers didn't rush in to drag Chauvin off of George Floyd's neck because they knew they would most likely be brutalized, arrested and incarcerated—if not killed. That's capitalist power. It has to go!

Progressive Labor Party has a vision of the future, something worth fighting for. There is a broad range of political thought within the West Coalition, and we respect one another. But speaking from the viewpoint of Progressive Labor Party, the future we need is communism. That means sharing all the wealth that the working class produces.

We will defeat racism. We will build a new world of sisterhood and brotherhood. We will abolish the wage system. No more buying and selling of human labor power.

Let's not forget capitalism and racism arose together historically. They cannot be separated. To defeat racism, we must defeat capitalism. And to defeat capitalism, we must defeat racism.

Biden won't do this. Marilyn Mosby [the Baltimore City State's Attorney] and Brian Frosh [Maryland's attorney general] won't do this. Brandon Scott [Baltimore's mayor] won't do this. On the national level, there have been 30 presidents since the end of slavery, and—during that whole century and a half—they have not defeated modern racism. Politicians won't—and can't—end racism.

WE must be the ones to fight for a future without systemic racism. Dare to struggle. Dare to win!✪

Anna Louise Strong: A journalist's journey to communism

™We are undertaking the most tremendous move ever made by labor in this country, a move which will lead who knows where!" editorialized Anna Louise Strong on February 4, 1917, the eve of the Seattle general strike.

These words were as much a reflection of her own enthusiasm and confusion as they were an analysis of the brave but naive Seattle working class. She found her way 15 months later to revolutionary Russia. Anna Louise Strong's autobiography I Change Worlds (1937) is the chronicle of this journey to communism.

Drawn to the Soviet Union like so many progressives of her generation, her first assignment was famine relief on the Russian river Volga. Fresh from the Seattle general strike, Anna Louise thought she was hot stuff until she met the young Russian communist Sonia. Sonia was donating her month's vacation to help the relief efforts. Drought, civil war and imperialist invasion had left the area devastated. The world capitalists hoped to starve the new socialist state into submission with an embargo.

"It is utterly impossible," lamented Strong upon seeing the starving thousands.

"There is nothing impossible" responded Sonia in clear firm tones.

"But millions will die!" said Anna Louise.

"Millions have already died" answered Sonia, with the steady hand of communist determination.

The NEP and U.S. aid

The New Economic Policy (NEP), instituted a year later, allowed some capitalist exploitation. In return, the U.S. sent a little food to the famine areas. Strong's misgivings about the U.S. relief and the NEP were reflected in her reports about Puriayeff, chairman of relief in a small village near Samara. Puriayeff, near starvation because he refused to eat more than the famine-stricken villagers he organized, had to meet with a U.S. representative from Washington. Strong reported:

Full-fed and aggressively content, he (the American relief man) sat in the best rooms Samara afforded, consuming a copious meal of borsch, chicken and wine. On the floor beside him were great baskets of hams, canned goods, wines and stronger drinks with foreign labels.

Puriayeff looked not at the food; he looked at the man's uniform - an officer's uniform of fine cloth with shining buttons and epaulets, well brushed as if for a parade ... He had seen such uniforms before ... He had seen them on the Tsar's officers and on the officers of the intervention. He had overthrown the men who wore them.

Then Puriayeff looked down at the hampers of food and wine; in his eyes was not the look of hunger, but of worried contempt. Was the old world he had helped overthrow coming back to rule the Volga?

The NEP ended in the late 20s. Under Joseph Stalin the Soviet five-year plans replaced NEP. The U.S. relief bureaucrats were sent packing, but not before they were caught smuggling thousands of dollars' worth of Tsarist jewels, now the property of the Russian working class, out of the country. Pravda (the daily newspaper of the then Communist Party of the Soviet Union) publicized the scandal to Strong's immense satisfaction.

Strong met many workers ready to work themselves to death (in fact a small number did) to build socialism during the first five-year plan. The Molvitino peasants stand out as an example. Molvitino was a small, back-water village, 50 miles from the railroad. Under the Tsar, it was plagued by pestilence and superstition. The Molvitinians, determined to become 20th century socialists, sent a delegation to the regional center for the Party's agricultural meeting. Sleepless, this delegation hiked and hitched, bluffed and bullied their way on horse carts, "commandeered" trucks and freight trains throughout the night to make the meeting on time at noon the next day. At the meeting they debated and decided, then fought their way home to carry out the Party's line on agricultural production. We could learn a lot from these "backward peasants."

Anna Louise Strong also met with Joseph Stalin to solve problems in her newspaper, The Moscow News. She described the comrades present: one was witty; the other was handsome; some were just trying to cover their asses. Stalin, the chairperson of the Communist Party of Russia, was the least imposing. Hours later, she realized that Stalin had guided the collective to find its own will with his constant probing and questions. He was the best communist of his time, she concluded.

The "comrade-creators," Strong's affectionate name for Party members, shook the foundations of her liberal progressive illusions. She saw that the Roosevelt New Deal in the U.S. was "making the poor support the starving to save the rich." She also saw how Germany could fall to fascism. "The pacifists had talked and talked and never acted. They had explained all their strengths and weaknesses, yet remained passive — just worried the capitalists into action."

Strong's ideas on love matured

"... I chose my husband, not from any of those emotional flurries which American romanticists call love but from a need far deeper - the deep, instinctive need of my own future. American youth, which wastes so much of life in bewildering emotion, needs to be told what I took years to know. To fall in love is very easy, even to remain in it is not difficult; our human loneliness is cause enough. But it is a hard quest worth making to find a comrade through whose presence one becomes steadily the person one desires to be. This I have found and hold.

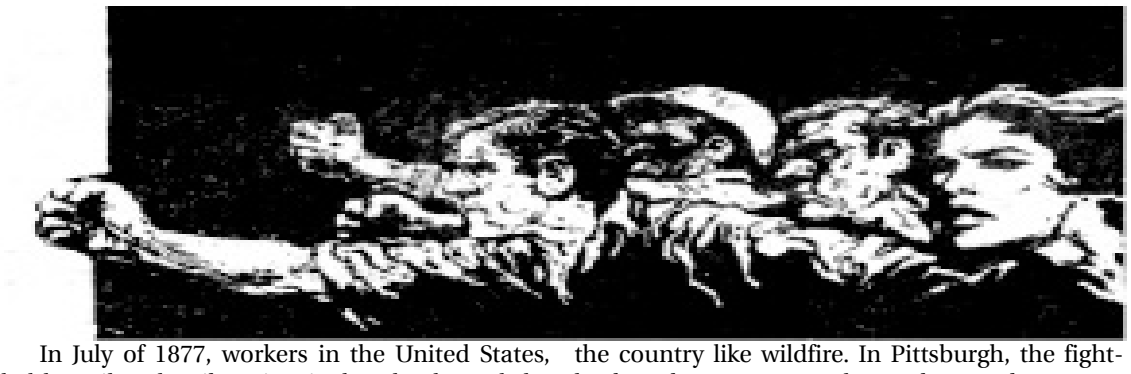
What is this thing, I thought, that I call 'truth and frankness,' when in Washington they tell you personal details while in Moscow they discuss a nation's plan." — Her very idea of truth had changed.

She was becoming a communist; she saw the value of communist theory. It had taken her 14 years of experience of revolution in three countries (Russia, China and Mexico) to know that the California co-op movement was getting nowhere. The communists in the United States knew it just from California and a book by Marx; she observed. She saw the value of a party and party discipline. Joining the party was "not to be chosen but to choose with others'. Freedom and comradeship can always grow wider. Increasing organization does not squeeze out freedom, but multiplies its vast variety of choices."

I Change Worlds is much more than the story of a remarkable journalist's travels from the U.S. to Russia. Anna Louise Strong also changed sides on the barricades. She chose the working class and communism. Her autobiography is useful for those of us who also desire to change worlds.✪

For a digital copy of this book, go to https://tinyurl.com/ichangeworlds

The Pittsburgh Commune of July 1877



In July of 1877, workers in the United States, led by railroad strikers in Pittsburgh, showed the power of a militant, armed working class. That year, the U.S. was shaken by massive rebellions sparked when the railroad bosses cut the rail workers' wages by 10 percent for the fourth time since 1873. The Panic of 1873 had started a depression that was devastating workers all across the country. That's capitalism at work. It's a constant stream of depressions, recessions, wars, climate disasters, and now a worldwide pandemic. Truly we have to get rid of this system that only benefits the capitalists.

With the fourth cut in their wages, workers in major rail centers in 16 of the then 38 states went on strike, first in West Virginia, then spreading through the country like wildfire. In Pittsburgh, the fightback took a new turn. The workers took up arms against the bosses' troops. The local militia refused to fire upon the workers and even the local cops refused. Many other workers joined the striking and protesting railroad workers. Men from the local militia and even some cops joined the protests.

When the workers in Pittsburgh first struck, they took possession of all the main rail switches leading in and out of Pittsburgh. Rail traffic, except for passenger and mail service, was shut tight. When the Pennsylvania Railroad bosses realized that the Pittsburgh police could not do anything to stop this, and that the militia would not do anything, they decided to bring in "crack" troops from Philadelphia, at the other end of the state of Pennsylvania.

The troops from Philadelphia came to Pittsburgh and within a matter of hours they shot down 20 workers, some at the 28th Street crossing, where thousands of men, women, and children were gathered.

With this, the anger of the working class increased. Thousands of workers from all major industries in the city joined the rail workers and together they formed an army of 4,000 armed workers. This army included white workers, Black workers, and workers from dozens of countries. They were young and old, men and women. They trapped the Philadelphia troops in the locomotive roundhouse and held them there all night. Then by setting the building on fire, they smoked them out and ran them 20 miles out of the city.

For four days afterwards, the working class fought the bosses, controlling many parts of the city. They took over the telegraph station and ran passenger and mail trains. They destroyed over 100 locomotives, about 50 passenger cars and over

Continued on page 7

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

Sandy was a winner

I was saddened to read about the death of comrade Sandy Spiers. Unfortunately I didn't manage to contribute to the recent Zoom memorial in her honor. I first met Sandy when she lived in Minneapolis where she joined Progressive Labor Party and I was helping to organize for the Party in the Midwest some 40 odd years ago. It was mid-winter and Sandy took me out to the university campus to sell CHALLENGE.

Being a Brooklynite, I was not exactly used to sub-zero temperature but Sandy told me it was standard operating procedure for the Minneapolis comrades. She instructed me how to snip off three of the ends of our gloves to be able to grasp the paper and still keep the rest of our hands "warm" as we hawked CHALLENGE.

Sandy was a winner! A truly inspiring comrade, fighting for communism.

★★★★★★★

Radio red tackles state capitalists and "communists"

On a radio talk show with guest speakers talking about the protests in Cuba and Haiti I expressed a view that the latest capitalist crisis was behind the numerous worker revolts worldwide. I also said the so-called "communist" countries like Cuba which spends billions on luxury tourist hotels while workers suffer lack of housing, apartheid vaccines and poverty and China which has the most billionaires and unreported worker rebellions are not unlike Haiti where workers are unemployed and starving because of capitalism. I concluded that workers need a real communist revolution to end capitalist inequality, poverty, racism, sexism and endless wars.

Then one of the speakers referred to me saying, "Comrade Joe should realize that criticizing the Cuban government lumps him with U.S. imperialists who are trying to destroy the Cuban revolution." That same speaker's counter-revolutionary criticism could be brought against comrades who criticize the Palestine Liberation Organization as really supporters of Israel in Palestine or brought against criticizing the billionaire class in "communist" China. All of these criticisms are part of historic capitalist attacks on real communists who first opposed capitalist wage differentials and privileges in the Soviet Union which eventually destroyed their attempt to end the capitalist profit system.

Comrades need to continue to expose phony socialist state capitalists and "communists" who put profits before people's lives. Workers must educate and advocate for real communism that can destroy capitalism's profit horrors.

★★★★★★★

Response: excellent, but don't use "riot"

The two articles on the Newark Summer Project in CHALLENGE (7/21 and 8/4) were excellent, especially the second article on pages 1 and 8 of CHALLENGE of 8/4) . On page 8 of the 2nd article under the subhead "Criticism as Opportunity for Progress," the article points to several aspects of the Summer Project that need improvement. This is excellent!

This is how we will prevent ourselves and our Party from becoming the "loyal opposition" as opposed to the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) that we have been since 1965. Our newer members are the ones who will carry on the struggle in the near and distant future. It is crucial that our newer comrades understand the difficulties that they will face AND that the only way to NOT fall prey to capitalist ideas and practices is through criticism and self-criticism ALONG WITH revolutionary practice with our co-workers and our base.

One small point: In the first article there is a quote from a speaker who said that the: "Main legacy of the civil rights movement and those riots ... " [emphasis added] The Black rebellions during the1960s were rebellions, NOT riots. It is important to explain to workers the significance of the difference. In fact, the Progressive Labor Movement in 1964 [which became the PLP] was the ONLY organization using the word rebellion to describe these fightbacks.

Glossary

Communist political terms

Fascism

Capitalism's response to a crisis of their system, when the bosses can no longer sustain the charade of liberal democracy and resort to more direct control and state terror instead. Fascism is marked by the ruling capitalists disciplining their own ranks to serve the urgent needs of the capitalist state and weather the crisis. To defend their system from internal and external threats, they use all the means available in their state apparatus, including violence. To build unity within their class and loyalty from workers, they rely on nationalist politics and calls for sacrifice. Their strategy is to mislead the working class to kill our working class sisters and brothers in the next inter-imperialist war.

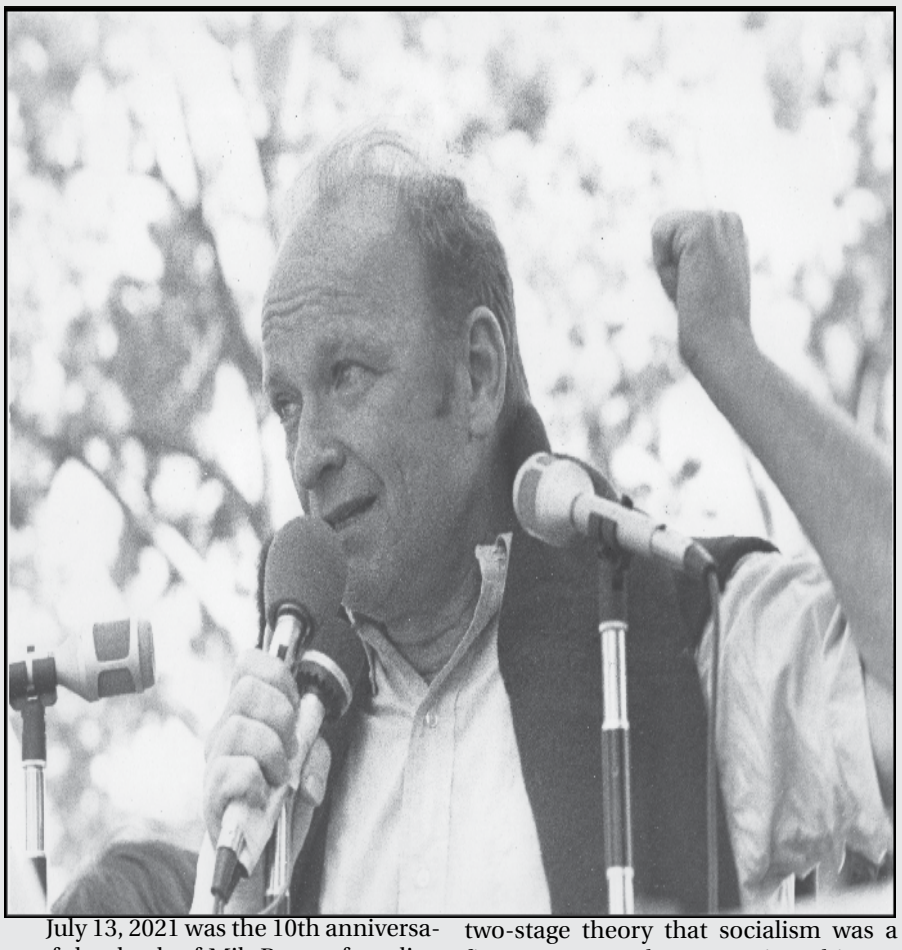
Big Fascists

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalist faction of the U.S. ruling class. They represent the wealthiest and most powerful bosses in the U.S., including multinational banks like Chase and Citibank, multinational oil companies like ExxonMobil, the big automakers, Boeing, Amazon, and the major media companies. As the dominant grouping since World War II, the Big Fascists were the architects of the liberal world order with the U.S. bosses on top. Their dominance rests on U.S. financial and military power and its strategic control of the Middle East and the flow of oil to Europe, Asia, and Africa. To sustain this dominance, they need to rebuild a huge, multiracial military for inter-imperialist war, most likely with China.

Small Fascists

The Small Fascists are a group of domestically oriented U.S. capitalists who are challenging the Big Fascists over the direction of U.S. imperialism. Since their interests are less tied to controlling the flow of oil, they are against heavy taxation to keep troops in the Middle East and in general oppose costly military bases and invasions. They're willing to rely on a smaller, whiter army, backed by nuclear weapons and the Air Force. They use open racism to build a political following.

Milt Rosen, a communist forever



July 13, 2021 was the 10th anniversary of the death of Milt Rosen, founding chairperson of Progressive Labor Party (PLP or PL). He served our organization and the working class in that capacity until 1995. The following is excerpted from the obituary that appeared in CHALLENGE August 3, 2011.

Sparked by Milt early on, PL exposed both counter-revolutionary revisionism and "revolutionary" nationalism as death traps of worker-boss unity. It indicted the state capitalists of the Soviet Union as far back as 1966, and then broke with the ones ruling the People's Republic of China. Those failed revolutions led PL to advance beyond Marx's two-stage theory that socialism was a first step toward communism; history had shown that socialism inevitably led back to the exploitation of capitalism. And unlike any other group on the landscape, the Party emphasized the importance of the fight against racism as a basic communist principle, not a mere tactic.

Milt's first brush with the enormous power of communist ideas came as a 17-year-old soldier (he had lied about his age) in Italy in World War II.

In one of its first mass activities, PLM (Progressive Labor Movement - precursor to PLP) stood behind 500 wildcatting, armed coal miners in Hazard, Kentucky, who were locked in an all-out war with the coal barons to win decent conditions and wages.

On May 2, 1964, under PLM's leadership, the first major demonstrations against the Vietnam War were staged in cities around the country.

Following the massive Washington anti-war rally in the spring of 1965, Milt saw that Students for A Democratic Society (SDS) had grown into the center of radical student politics. From 1966 to 1968, PL would do its largest-scale political organizing among students.

After stepping down as Party chair and before becoming too ill to function, Milt continued to make vital contributions to PL and the international movement. Among his most significant lessons was the need to understand the character of our historical period. Shortly after the events of 9/11, he spoke of how he'd underestimated the impact of the old communist movement's demise, and how far it has set back the class struggle. This failing, he pointed out, could lead to one of two devastating errors: false optimism or despair over the formidable difficulties in building a mass communist party. Milt's self-criticism reminded us that the old movement's defeat may have left us in a "dark night," but the working class has lived and fought through dark nights before.

While the end of the old movement was the worst setback we've ever suffered, it isn't the end of history. It's not the end of class struggle. Our Party exists all over the world, and small though it may be, it is growing. With words and by example, Milt taught the vital importance of a long-term outlook. More clearly than most, he knew there were no shortcuts to revolution. He embraced it as the commitment of a lifetime.

More than anything, he taught us never to give up.✪

The Pittsburg Commune of July 1873

Continued from page 5

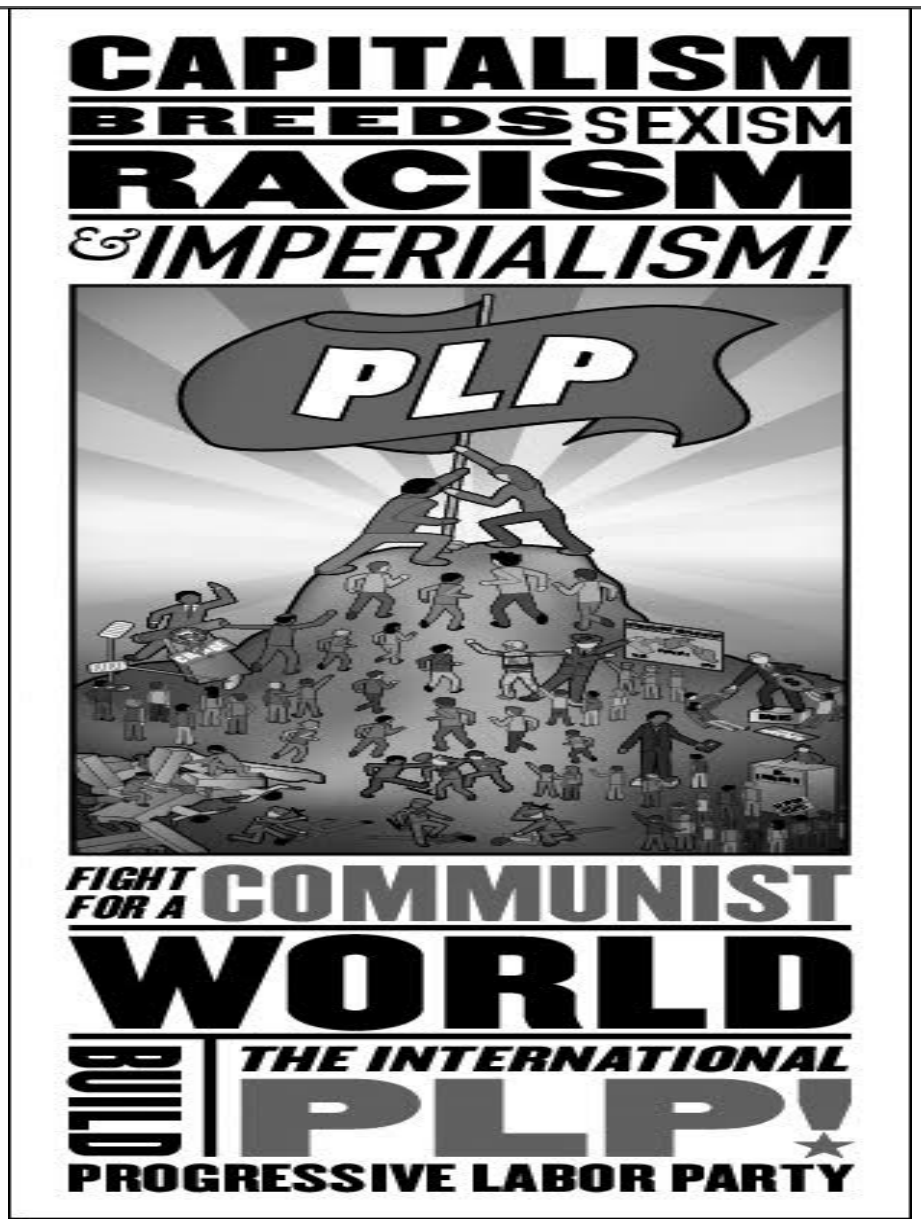
1,200 freight cars. They ransacked gun shops and a gun factory for weapons. Eventually, the U.S. government sent over 10,000 state and federal troops to regain control of the city.

This strike and insurrection led to more militant strikes that won some reforms for workers. In particular, by the end of the 19th century many workers had won the eight hour day, instead of working 10 to 12 hours six days a week. Yet here we are in 2021 and many workers are again working long hours for little pay. And racism, sexism, wars for profit, gross inequality and now a worldwide pandemic ravage the world. We have to keep fighting.

In Progressive Labor Party (PLP), we say that what the working class needs to rid ourselves of this bosses' system is revolution. The PLP marched in Pittsburgh on July 23, 1977, the 100th anniversary of the Pittsburgh Commune. We did so not only to commemorate that valiant struggle, but to tell the workers of Pittsburgh that what they did in 1877 must be done again and again and again, until the bosses and their system of death is destroyed, and a system of communism is built.

Next time, we must not stop at taking a few of the bosses' cities, but we must fight to smash their whole damn system and establish communism—a society run by and for the working class.✪

Sources: *Challenge-Desafio, May 19, 1977, p. 5; Walter Linder, "The National Railroad Strikes of 1877,' 3 parts. SOC Newsletter; PLP, The Pittsburgh Insurrection and Railroad Strike of 1877, June 1977. This booklet has a bibliography of 17 entries.*



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Abbreviations
NYT= New York Times
GW=Gaurdian Weekly

Racist rulers' press fed anti-Black terror

NYT, 7/11 The 1898 white supremacist coup… overthrew the government of the majority-Black city of Wilmington….The wrongful prosecution of Black defendants, known as the Groveland Four,… were charged with rape in 1949….The Orlando Morning Sentinel's…bloodthirsty coverage featured a front-page editorial cartoon that depicted four empty electric chairs under the headline "No Compromise!"….

The Kansas City Star….remained silent when bombs exploded in the homes of Black people not far from its own offices.….When a flood devastated the city in 1977, the Star ignore[ed] the fact that the flood had also swallowed homes of residents in Black areas. The newspaper showed more concern for missing pets than for Black citizens ….

The white press in the South …by portraying even the most grotesque…violence as necessary to protect a besieged white community….Ida Wells of the fiery Memphis weekly… "The Free Speech"… showed that mobs regularly lynched innocent victims as part of a terror tactic…intended to keep the Black community on its knees….

The Evening Scimitar…called for him [presumed male editorial writer] to be tied to a stake… his forehead was branded with a hot iron and castrated "with a pair of tailor's shears."

….The white press…campaign[ed] for the interracial government of Wilmington to be overthrown….The majority-Black city was a stronghold of African American economic and political success to…Black craftsmen…and public servants who included aldermen, magistrates and mail carriers.

The News & Observer…ran infamous editorial cartoons…showing a Black vampire bat labeled "Negro Rule" hovering over the state.

The toxic campaign yielded fruit…when a mob…burned the offices of the Wilmington Daily Record,…the only Black-owned daily newspaper in the United States at the time. The vigilantes swept through the streets shooting some African Americans and exiling others….The New York Times referred…to the overthrow as necessary for restoring "law and order…."

The [Richmond] Planet described unarmed Black people being shot dead in the streets or driven into the woods,…the carnage…[said to be] resulted from "a concerted conspiracy…"

….The massacre of Black sharecroppers in Elaine, Ark. [followed their] banding together to demand a fair price for their crop…. "Enraged white planters and farmers chased down Black men and women in the high cotton of Phillips County in a frenzy lasting seven days, until the count of the dead approached 200."

….The sharecroppers had been slaughtered for contesting a form of slavery under which white overlords swindled them out of their earnings.

Climate change = more injuries, lost wages for workers

NYT, 7/16 Extreme heat causes many times more workplace injuries than official records capture and…are concentrated among the poorest workers…how climate change worsens inequality.

Hotter days don't just mean more cases of heat stroke, but also injuries from falling, being struck by vehicles or mishandling machinery…leading to an additional 20,000 workplace injuries each year in California alone….

…Extreme heat isn't just a threat to outdoor workers, but also those who work indoors in… manufacturing plants and warehouses. Those… mean lost wages and higher medical bills for low-income workers across a huge range of industries....Extreme heat is likely to have caused about 20,000 extra injuries a year, or 360,000 extra injuries [in California] over the 18-year period…studied.

….The lowest-paid 20 percent of workers suffer five times as many heat-related injuries as the highest-paid 20 percent of workers….

…Low-income neighborhoods around the United States tend to be significantly warmer than wealthy neighborhoods during the summer…. stem[ming] from a lack of air-conditioning….

Richest 1 percent gained $10 TRILLION since 2020

NYT, 7/13 By the start of 2021, the richest 1 percent of Americans held 32 percent of the nation's wealth….The bottom 50 percent…held just 2 percent of the nation's wealth….

…Since the start of 2020, the bottom 50 percent gained….a mere pittance compared with the mammoth gains for the ever fewer who are ever richer: in the same period, the richest 1 percent gained $10 trillion….

…A quarter of…households still can't even afford the medical treatment they require, lower-income millennials have student debt equal to at least 372 percent of income, and still more can't handle even a $400 unexpected expense.

Ecological racism attacks Black, Latin workers

NYT, 6/30 A majority of people who live in the Texas coastal communities of Brownsville, Corpus Christi and Port Arthur are brown and Black….are also locations for proposed terminals to load liquified natural gas on tankers….Discrimination in housing forced Black and brown people into areas near polluting industries that threaten their health and safety….Toxic-waste dumps, municipal landfills, garbage incinerators and similar noxious facilities tended to be in minority neighborhoods….

…The journal Science Advances…found that "racial-ethnic minorities in the United States are exposed to disproportionately high levels of ambient fine particulate air pollution, the largest environmental cause of human mortality….because of a legacy of racist housing policy….Brownsville,… nearly 94 percent Latino…would be the home of two new terminals…just one city out of many along the gulf and across the United States…bear[ing] the brunt of fossil fuel infrastructure that spew harmful pollutants into the air and water.

These terminals would release thousands of tons of particulate and nitrogen oxide into already polluted air. The Washington Posted reported "Federal regulators approved the construction of export terminals along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts while relying on industry safety calculations that…significantly understate the potential force"…of vapor cloud explosion.

…FERC [Federal Energy Regularly Commission] has approved nearly 500 pipelines and rejected just two….An agency lawyer…[argued] that the project did not disproportionately affect minority and low-income populations…reason]ing] that all of the communities… [in the zone] were minority or low-income [and] thus not disproportionately affected.

PROFILED: MOVIE TO ACTION

JUSTICE MEANS JOINING THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) here recently hosted a screening and discussion of the documentary PROFILED about the fight against police killings in New York. A group of comrades and friends gathered to eat and watch the movie, including three families impacted by racist police violence. Even though the movie came out five years ago, the movement against police terror still faces the same issues: What is justice? And how do we get there?

Despair to revolutionary optimism

After the movie there was a discussion that ranged from grief and despair to revolutionary optimism. One impacted family member brought up how futile the fight seemed when presented with families that have been fighting for justice for decades with seemingly no results. "I thought it was a sad documentary. It seemed like no matter how many baby steps or changes we make, things have gotten worse...It did show a great deal of unity between families that I loved how they helped each other, like what you guys (PLP and mass organization) do for us."

When asked about the revolution versus reform discussion, she said, "I think something big has to happen in order for things to change and eventually we need a revolution and I feel that it is coming. Do I think it's needed? Yes, I just hope something positive comes from it."

Veteran comrades chimed in with their experiences of organizing for communism over the decades and how they keep their optimism as they continue to plant seeds. There was wide agreement that the problem of police brutality could not be solved under capitalism which led to a lively discussion of reform versus revolution.

Two women workers join the fight for communism

It was good that earlier that week, two of the young women—the kkkops murdered their brother—joined our club in which we read excerpts of PLP's Reform and Revolution. In one instance, her brother was killed while hospitalized last year while in a mental health crisis. It is more and more clear to her the complicity of not just the killer cops, but also the hospital bosses, and that simply "defunding the police is not enough."

The other young woman has been a militant fighter for nearly two years since her brother was murdered in South LA and has grown close to the Party as we have with her. She and her family have seen the documentary twice, including last year when the sister of Shantel Davis came to Los Angeles for our Party forum. This year she joined our club and said she recognized how these "pigs are connecting families all around the country and world and is inspired by the families dedication to keep fighting even though they won't get 'justice' under capitalism."

She joined Party members in Minneapolis last year and said, "It was only because we fought militantly and the workers rebelled that Chauvin went to jail, but that reforms only build illusions in this system while revolution changes the system."

She also liked what one friend said about how he was recently taken out of his bubble and now is a committed organizer who is open to learning more about alternatives to capitalism and how to get there from here. She said this "light switch" moment in him was inspiring and shows how we can "expand this movement."

As PLP's involvement in the anti-police terror campaigns in LA has expanded from one family to a coalition of 30 families, between almost daily actions and meetings it is difficult to not get caught up in just the day to day of the reform struggle. We have made a recent decision to be more intentional about raising revolutionary communism as an alternative with certain families and base members as our relationships have deepened.

Fight builds working-class leaders

It is heartbreaking and infuriating at the untold pain these families suffer at the hands of kkkops and capitalism. Most reform organizations rely on the families to simply share the horrors that happened to them over and over again, which is retraumatizing. Of course, the families want every opportunity to use these platforms to share the story of their loved one. Yet it is heartening and inspiring at how this mass work, with our leadership, has grown. Dozens of families are uniting and finding ways to support each other. They are becoming organizers and leaders. They have moved from not only talking about their tragedy, but also fighting for other families. Most importantly, they are discussing how we need to change this whole damn system of capitalism.

We still have a long way to go in this fight, but we are in the trenches with these incredible families and supporters, raising our revolutionary communist ideology and practice with them. We have a world to win!✪

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